



TOPSIDE



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The NDP Newsletter for NOAA Diving Supervisors and Divers

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NOAA Diving Center

7600 Sand Point Way NE

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TRAINING SCHEDULE

All individuals applying for any dive classes offered by the NDC must submit the following items; NOAA Diving Training Request and Authorization form, completed NOAA diving physical, swim test, dive resume, Standardized Equipment Measurement form, and current First-aid/CPR certificates. All forms are available online at: www.ndc.noaa.gov/forms.html. Completed forms can be mailed or faxed to the Diving Center.

Unfortunately, the DMT class has been canceled for budgetary reasons and the MPIC class is under fiscal review.

Events scheduled through March 2007:

Jan. 8 - 19	MPIC (tentative)	Seattle
Jan. 8 - 26	Working Diver	Key West
Jan. 22 - 26	Divemaster	Key West
Mar. '07	TBD Tentative WD Refresher	Sea.
May 7 - 25	Working Diver	Seattle
May 20 - 25	Divemaster	Seattle

Please contact Laurie Barber at 206-526-6695 or via e-mail laurie.barber@noaa.gov.



NEW EMPLOYEE

Please join us in welcoming our new team member, Mrs. Carla Feoranzo. Carla recently moved to the Seattle area to join her husband who is active duty Coast Guard. They were transferred from Sault Ste. Marie, MI where she worked for the USCG in the Industrial and Engineering Depts. We're extremely pleased to have Carla on-board and she looks forward to getting to know all of our divers. She can be reached at Carla.Feoranzo@noaa.gov or 206-526-6623.



GENERAL INFO AND FAQ's ON CONTRACT DIVERS

Faced with increasing operational requirements and decreasing access to new FTE positions, NOAA programs are turning to contractors more and more to provide additional manpower to meet staffing needs.

Contract employees diving with NOAA fall under the auspices of the NOAA Diving Program (NDP). Therefore, contractors must follow the NDP's policies and procedures for initial and continuing dive certification, diving operations, and equipment utilization. Contract divers play a vital role in helping meet NOAA research goals and objectives and are some of the most talented and experienced divers within the NDP. It is anticipated that the number of contract divers will only increase in the future.

The dive center is frequently contacted regarding liability issues for contract divers by NOAA programs, contracting agencies and individual contract divers. It is evident that confusion and misunderstanding exists about liability coverage and other issues associated with these divers.

In an effort to address some of these concerns, here are some of the more frequently asked contract diver questions with corresponding answers:

Q: Are contract divers covered for emergency or long-term medical care they may need if they are injured while diving with the federal government?

A: No. All medical expenses are the responsibility of the contracting company, not NOAA.

Q: Are contract divers covered for loss of income under FECA ("workmen's comp") if they are injured while diving with the federal government?

A: No. Workmen's comp is also the responsibility of the contracting company.

Q: As a contractor who dives with the federal government, what should I do to ensure that I am covered by insurance for medical care and workmen's comp in case I'm injured on the job?

A: Contact your employer to determine what coverage is provided and to request insurance where it may be currently lacking.

Q: Is there anything else I should do as a contractor who dives with the federal government?

A: Yes. Ensure that diving is specifically listed as one of your duties in your contract.

Q: As a contractor with the federal government, can I serve in a supervisory role (e.g., as Divemaster) during diving operations?

A: It depends on who's diving. Contractors can supervise other contract divers (assuming that their employers' allow them) but cannot supervise federal employees.

It is also important to note that these concerns do not only apply in the diving context. To the extent that you have other questions about federal coverage for contractors, please contact your employer. Or, for general questions on coverage for contract employees, call Susan Buck in HR at (301) 713-4477, ext. 187. Contact NDC with any dive questions. 